

## **JCCU Meeting Friday 2 February 2007, 2.15pm Higman room, Maths Institute**

**Present:** Dr Audrey Curnock (Mathematics Teaching Committee, Maths and Philosophy Joint Committee rep), Dr J Ouakine (Senior member representing Computing), Dr Matthias Winkel (Senior member representing Statistics), Shelley Harper (MPLS), James Holwell (Exeter, MURC chairperson), Hannah Clapham (Hertford, MURC secretary), Helen Beggs (Merton), Linus Mattauch (Maths and Philosophy Rep, St Hugh's), Muting Wan (St Hugh's, Maths and Stats Rep), Graham O'Connor (Trinity, Questionnaire Rep), Yan-Chee Yu (Deputy Academic Administrator), Maria Molokova (LMH, MURC secretary elect, Maths and Computer science Rep).

**Apologies from:** Rosalind Freeman (Hertford, MURC chairperson elect), Dr R Earl (School's Liaison Officer)

### **Minutes (Unconfirmed)**

#### **1. Meeting held on 27 October 2006:**

- a) Minutes from the last meeting were held as a true representation of the meeting.
- b) No matters arose.

#### **2. Examinations 2006**

- a) (i) Honour School of Mathematics and Philosophy Part B internal report is not on the website.  
(ii) Mathematics and Statistics reports will be on the new website, now expected at the end of February.
- b) The Honour School of Mathematics external examiner's report was commented on. It was mentioned that there will be no change to the database.

#### **3. Reports from the meetings of the Faculty/Teaching /Academic Committees:**

- a) Mathematics: We were told of a working party set up to look at degree classifications (profiling, rounding, how they do this at other universities.)
- b) Computer Science: Nothing to report
- c) Statistics: Under review is 2<sup>nd</sup> year combinatorics and optimization course, with a view to becoming a 3<sup>rd</sup> year option for Maths and Stats and Maths students. In Part B, Statistical Inference is to become a full unit. These will be decided on at the academic committee in 6<sup>th</sup> week.

#### **4. New Proctors rules on penalties for late submission of course work**

These have been sent out to Maths students and will shortly be going out to Maths and Stats and Maths and Computer Science students. A brief overview of them was given: late submission of coursework must have the permission of the proctors, but it will be the examiners who decide on the penalty given. Students are not permitted to contact the examiners directly; all communication must go via the Senior Tutor to the Proctors.

**5. Revised complaints procedure**

These have been changed to be made more ‘student friendly’ with an emphasis on talking to the person concerned first and only then to Director of Undergraduate Studies, Senior Tutor or Personal Tutor. All complaints if not immediately resolved will be recorded centrally. Going to the Proctors should be a very last point of call. All other avenues to resolve issues should be explored first.

One student asked if there could be a mention of MURC in the Undergraduate section, and said he would draft something, with view to it being included next year.

**6. New English Language Admissions Criteria**

The decision on changing the criteria has been postponed and there will be more consultation. Our division is the only one opposed to a rise in the criteria, as they believe it may bar capable students from admission.

**7. Meeting with Examination Schools**

Dr Curnock and Catherine Goodwin met with staff at the Examination Schools. There should be draft timetables by the end of February. They have new staff overseeing the scheduling.

We were told that a working party has been set up university wide to look at student databases, and the way information is handled. Also **Ann Grocock** is looking at the way the university runs examinations in order for things to run more smoothly.

**8. Soft-skills development: ASPIRE**

This is a service offered by the careers service and leaflets are given to 1<sup>st</sup> years. There was comment that it would also be useful for other years.

**9. Course Changes**

- a) The current regulations state that any student with an honours pass may continue to Part C. There have been problems with students, who obtained low honours, struggling with Part C. For this reason, the entry requirements to Part C will be raised to a 2:2, to be implemented for current 1<sup>st</sup> years. It was asked if MURC members would consult first year students on this.

It was then discussed how current students get a classification at end of Part B and then another at the end of Part C. There was a mistake on the Part B exam entry form asking us if we wished to be classified. That should not have been there but was spotted too late. You should tick “classify after Part B” if you intend to take the three-year BA.

- b) Curriculum Revisions

(i) A) A working party has been set up to look at the first four terms of algebra. A draft syllabus will be out in 2/3 weeks. There were comments about some of the theorems at the end of the course seeming unrelated, as did the Chinese remainder theorem. One student commented that 3 weeks rings, then 5 algebra was a good way to do it. The new plan is for 7 lectures on rings, then the rest algebra. MURC were asked to consult current 2<sup>nd</sup> years on this.

B) The Mods calculus course is also to be looked at. The section on Lagrange multipliers was commented on. There is to be a new syllabus for Part A integration.

One student had some comments on the Martingale course, and he was asked to write these and give them to Dr Curnock.

**10. Course Evaluation Questionnaire Results:**

- a) i) In general students feel that there are not enough examples given. One student commented that she had heard the opposite complaint about the Groups in Action course.
- b) ii) The concerns raised in the questionnaires for Parts B and C are being followed up, including issues such as TAs not attending classes. The size of classes is to be looked at. This prompted a discussion of classes, and it was commented that some felt 90mins was too long, and 4 classes not enough. Dr Curnock said that the amount of hours for Part C students was being looked at, as maybe they could do more independent learning, as they would if they were to do a DPhil. Some felt this unfair as not everyone doing the 4<sup>th</sup> year intends to do a DPhil. It is hoped to introduce more project and presentation work in the final year.  
It was commented that those in third year doing Part C options said they found them the most interesting, and it was wondered if this had anything to do with the way it was taught, or simply that students only chose them if it were a subject matter they enjoyed.

**11. Open Days**

It was hoped that MURC representatives would help at these.

**12. Schools Liaison Officer Matters**

The Oxbridge conferences are to be held in March, and students can go along, or help out at these if they wish.

**13. Lecture List for Trinity Term 2007.**

It was said that these will appear on the website sometime between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> week.

**14. Notice to Candidates- email or paper?**

This was met with a resounding request for paper notifications.

**15. Other matters raised by junior members**

- a) There was a query as to whether class lists could go up in the Institute for those students living out of college accommodation. This is not possible for data protection reasons. It was shown that access to Minerva is available from outside the university network with a VPN, and that there should be a link for how to do this on the maths website. It was also noted that students could check on computers in the Institute and if they had forgotten their passwords could contact Stuart Teasdale to get new ones.
- b) There was a query about overcrowding in lectures, in particular the Part A Calculus of Variations course. Yan said that the issue was not overcrowding, there was only

120 in a 180 capacity lecture theatre, but uneconomical seating, and that the lecturer had been asked to ask people to sit in a better fashion.

- c) There was a question about typed lecture notes, and it was clarified that lecturers do not have to provide them. The blind student in the first year was having his lecture notes in Latex, and this would continue for him through out his time here. Thereby all students will have access to many more online lecture notes over the next 3-4 years. It was commented that there was a student in Part B who types his lecture notes, and he would be asked about them.
- d) We were told that the timing for Part C half unit exams was being looked at. The proposed change is from 1hr 45 mins to 1hr 35 mins.
- e) There was a complaint that a student did not know he could not take B2 as a half unit. This is in the supplement to the handbook.
- f) Dr Curnock gave the MURC representatives some questions to ask fellow students about. These included whether it was necessary to have a meeting to discuss options at the start of Part A and/or B. It was decided this was done in colleges, but it may be an idea to explain to students how the class system in Part B works. The timing for this was debated, beginning of Michaelmas or Trinity were suggested. It was thought that towards the end of Trinity students were more interested in the exams they have to take, and go home straight after them. It was commented that the options day for Part C was thought very useful.
- g) The Maths and Philosophy students take the lecture course for B1 in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year but do not sit the exam until a year later. It was noted that this year there was a change in lecturer, who made new notes changing the language of them and without referring to the previous year's lecture notes. It was floated that there could be a special exam for the Maths and Phil students, but this creates more work for the examiners and also makes the calibration of marks hard. This needs to be discussed with the lecturer and those students whom it affects. Dr Curnock to follow up.
- h) Dr Curnock commented that there should be a first year representative in MURC and at JCCU meetings.